

# SCRIPPS PROTON THERAPY

# CONNECT

A quarterly newsletter for Scripps Proton Therapy Center patients, their families, and others interested in proton therapy treatment.

Spring 2016



## Learning to Dance in the Rain

### Bev Grant Chose Proton Therapy for Breast Cancer

Following a partial mastectomy for cancer in her right breast, Bev Grant was about to start traditional X-ray radiation therapy when a friend convinced her to look into proton therapy first.

"I have a pit bull of a friend who is a brilliant biotech guy. He was going through proton therapy at Scripps for prostate cancer, and he told me it was a breeze and I had to do it," says Bev, 70, a retired school teacher. "He said proton was leading-edge treatment and people were coming from around the world to have it. He told me he would not be able to live with himself if he didn't do everything possible to make sure I was as informed as possible about proton therapy."

Then, Bev learned that another friend's mother was having heart surgery. "Her mother had had radiation for breast

cancer 10 years earlier, and her doctors told her the radiation had damaged her heart," Bev says. "That really got to me."

Bev ultimately agreed to meet with radiation oncologist Huan Giap, MD. She learned she would need just 10 proton treatments over the course of two weeks, as opposed to six to eight weeks of traditional radiation therapy.

"It would be less invasive and a shorter treatment time," Bev says. "Finally, I was convinced that proton therapy was the correct decision."

Bev was impressed with everything about Scripps Proton Therapy Center, from the beautiful design and advanced technology to the friendly, professional staff.

"Everybody was kind and professional and had a wonderful sense of humor," Bev says. "More than any other time in my life, I resorted to humor to get me through, and they seemed to feel that and humored me right back."

Throughout her treatment, Bev was able to go about her daily life and activities, including spending time with her two grandchildren. While she felt a bit more fatigued than usual, she kept up her regular social activities and day trips.

Bev also was inspired by something Dr. Giap had said: "Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass, but it is about learning how to dance in the rain."

"We had a lot of fun at the proton center. We met people from Dubai and China, and a doctor from Illinois. We went to lunch and were setting up social activities after our treatments," she says. "It's like being in a club you don't want to be part of, but you get to share it with good people."

SCRIPPS PROTON THERAPY **CONNECT** is a quarterly newsletter for Scripps Proton Therapy Center patients, their families, and others interested in proton therapy treatment. We invite you to stay up to date with the latest proton news and developments, both here at Scripps and around the world. We hope you enjoy the newsletter, and we welcome your comments and suggestions for future issues. Email us at [SPTConnect@scrippshealth.org](mailto:SPTConnect@scrippshealth.org).



# Healthy Living

Small Changes Can Have Big Health Benefits

Do you think you should be making healthier food choices, but the thought of revamping your diet feels overwhelming? Start small. The following changes are relatively easy to implement, but can add up to significant health benefits. Exchanging one food for a similar but smarter one can help you lower blood pressure, improve your cholesterol levels, and make it easier to manage your weight. Here are five simple substitutions to try:

**1 Replace iceberg lettuce with darker greens.** Trade iceberg lettuce for dark leafy greens such as spinach, arugula, or kale. Darker greens are excellent sources of vitamins A and C, as well as magnesium and potassium, which can help control high blood pressure. Plus, you get more fiber.

**2 Replace processed breakfast cereal with steel-cut oats.** Many breakfast cereals are made with refined grains and can be low in fiber and high in sugar. Switch to oatmeal or a multi-grain cereal instead. If you are short on time, prepare several servings of oatmeal at once and reheat them in the morning. Mix in almonds, walnuts or low-fat yogurt for a protein boost.

**3 Replace refined white grains with whole grains.** Research has shown that eating whole grains can lower your risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes by 20 to 30 percent. Instead of white rice or white pasta, try brown rice, quinoa or whole wheat pasta. Instead of white bread, choose bread with a whole grain listed as the first ingredient. As a bonus, because whole grains are more filling than refined grains that have had the fiber stripped away, you'll feel full longer.

**4 Replace oil with applesauce.** Instead of making cakes or fruit breads with oil, use an equal amount of applesauce. In addition to reducing fat and calories, substituting applesauce makes baked foods lighter and moister. Choose natural, unsweetened applesauce with no added sugar.

**5 Replace fruit juice with whole fruit.** Drinking a glass of fruit juice does not provide the same benefits as eating the whole fruit. Apple, orange, and grape juices have had the fiber-rich skins and pulp of the fruit removed; fiber helps slow the rate at which sugar is absorbed by your bloodstream and helps avoid insulin spikes, which is especially important for people with diabetes.



## Proton Therapy in the News

### Scripps Proton Therapy Center in Forbes Magazine

Forbes magazine included Scripps Proton Therapy Center and medical director Carl Rossi, M.D., in its "California Healthcare Innovators" promotion. "Unleashing the Full Power of Proton Radiation Therapy" highlighted the benefits of proton therapy and its advantages over traditional X-ray radiation treatments, including greater accuracy, less damage to healthy tissues and, in many cases, fewer or less severe side effects.

The November 23, 2015 promotion also noted that Scripps Proton Therapy Center is one of only two centers that treat patients exclusively with pencil-beam scanning, the most precise proton delivery technology available.

"Because pencil beam allows us to treat large shapes, irregularly shaped fields and even multiple fields efficiently, we can now use proton therapy on virtually all of the same cancers we've been treating with X-ray therapy for nearly 100 years," Dr. Rossi said. "Pencil-beam scanning allows proton therapy to reach its full potential."

Also mentioned was Scripps Proton Therapy Center's involvement in several multi-institutional research studies as a member of the Proton Collaborative Group. The studies aim to help optimize use of proton therapy.

"Like anything in medicine, we're always trying to find ways to improve," said Dr. Rossi.





# Karen Ward, RN, Named Scripps Nurse of the Year

Every year, Scripps Health honors some of the organization's best nurses with the *Nurse of the Year* award. This year, our own Karen Ward, RN, BS, earned the recognition for the dedication and care she gives to our proton therapy patients.

Karen started working at Scripps eight years ago and moved to Scripps Proton Therapy Center in 2013. As a clinic nurse, she partners with Dr. Ryan Grover to care for patients who have been diagnosed with head and



neck and central nervous system cancers, and arranges for consultations with other physicians and specialists.

Karen's love of helping people naturally led to a nursing career. As an undergraduate student at UCSD, she assisted children with learning disabilities including ADD, ADHD, and autism. She majored in biochemistry and cell biology, and became interested in health care.

"I wanted to make a positive impact in the lives of others during challenging and vulnerable times, and I knew nursing would be a great fit for me," says Karen. "I came to the proton therapy center because I wanted to take care of patients going through a difficult journey, provide education and symptom management, and be there to encourage them along the way. Also, being a part of cutting-edge treatment for patients is pretty awesome!"

Proton patients receive treatment daily, so the nurse-patient relationship can be strong. Karen goes above and beyond for her patients by being proactive and anticipating their needs.

"I observe which patients may need a shoulder to cry on and/or a little extra time," she says. "Something as simple as listening to a patient's story, concerns, and questions can make a huge impact."

In addition, because Dr. Grover's

patient population includes international patients, Karen has learned to provide culturally sensitive care for patients from China and Turkey.

"I learn about the patient's cultural beliefs and values ahead of time. I work closely with the on-site interpreter to ensure I understand their health care beliefs, what their goals are, what their specific needs are, and how they express pain," she explains. "Understanding and addressing these specific items can increase compliance with their treatment plan."

Karen finds it especially rewarding to see her patients recover from cancer and lead a better quality of life as a result of the proton treatment, and she values the collaborative nature of her job.

"I could not have been awarded this honor without the help and support from my peers. We definitely have great teamwork here, and I love it!"

When she's not caring for patients, Karen enjoys traveling, hiking, practicing yoga, and playing with her new kitten, Winston, who was adopted from a local shelter.

## Patients Toast to Shared Connections and Support

More than 65 attendees enjoyed the first Scripps Proton Therapy Connect event on March 31.

Past and current patients, their family and friends reunited with proton therapy physicians and staff for an evening of socializing and support.

Tim Collins, Corporate VP of Operations, warmly welcomed guests and thanked everyone for supporting the Center and, especially, each other. He recognized Harrison and Joanne Miller for their ongoing dedication in coordinating weekly dinners for proton therapy patients, which give patients the opportunity to get to know others undergoing proton treatment. Attendees enjoyed a brief presentation by



Dr. Huan Giap reunites with former patient, Randy Williams, and his wife Julie

a Scripps psychologist on the healing power of positivity, tips for living with a positive mindset, and the importance of having supportive social connections.

"We were thrilled to have our alumni back at the Center. Many of the patients and their families developed special relationships and we were so pleased to welcome them back to our facility," said Tim Collins. "Scripps Proton Therapy Connect is about helping our patients build healing relationships, stay in touch and share their experiences with others who are considering or currently undergoing treatment."

The next event is planned for the fall; look for more information in an upcoming newsletter.



Spread the Word:

## Scripps Proton Therapy Center Open House

Thursday, May 12  
6:00–7:30 p.m.

**Scripps Proton Therapy Center**

9730 Summers Ridge Road  
San Diego, CA 92121

Please invite anyone who may be interested in proton therapy to tour the Center and meet the physicians and staff.

For more information or to register, call 1-800-SCRIPPS (727-4777) by May 9, 2016, or register online at [scripps.org/openhouse](http://scripps.org/openhouse).



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